

# Quick bursts of exercise can help diabetics' hearts

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(HealthDay)—Frequent, short exercise sessions may be better for

diabetes patients' blood vessels than longer and fewer workouts, and that may reduce their risk of heart disease, according to a new study.

People with type 2 diabetes are at increased risk for heart disease and reduced vascular (blood vessel) function, the study authors noted. Measuring vascular function is often used to determine heart disease risk.

Other research has shown that spending less time sitting and getting more exercise lowers the risk of [heart disease](#) in all people, not just those with diabetes.

But with "rapidly advancing technologies in workplaces, transportation and [home entertainment](#), fewer opportunities exist for incidental activity, creating many contexts of daily life that are conducive to prolonged sitting," according to the report published online recently in the *American Journal of Physiology-Heart and Circulatory Physiology*.

Frances Taylor, a [doctoral candidate](#) in exercise and sports science at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, led the study.

Taylor's team compared how blood flow and blood vessel dilation in obese adults with type 2 diabetes responded to shorter, more frequent or longer, less-frequent exercise sessions.

In one test, participants sat for eight hours without taking any exercise breaks. In a second test, they took breaks from sitting by doing three minutes of exercises that included squats, leg lifts and calf raises every 30 minutes. In a third test, they took six-minute exercise breaks every hour.

Compared with uninterrupted sitting, blood vessel function tended to improve with both exercise approaches, but it improved significantly

more with exercise every 30 minutes, the study found.

The finding suggests that the frequency of the activity break may be more important than how long it lasts, the researchers said in a journal news release.

Because blood vessel function deteriorates as type 2 diabetes progresses, it's possible that more frequent interruptions to sitting are needed to preserve [blood flow](#) to the legs, Taylor's team reported.

"Our findings suggest that more-frequent and shorter breaks may be more beneficial than longer, less-frequent breaks for improvement in vascular function in those with [type 2 diabetes]," they concluded.

**More information:** For more on type 2 diabetes, go to the [American Diabetes Association](#).

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